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Should 18-Year-Olds Be Allowed To Vote?

Moderator: JAMES F. MURRAY, JR.

Speakers

KENNETH B. KEATING

FANNIE HURST



COMING

—March 16, 1954—

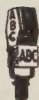
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THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

REPRESENTATIVE KENNETH B. KEATING—Republican of New York; member of the House Judiciary Committee. Born in 1900, and educated at Genesee Wesleyan Seminary in Lima, New York, Representative Keating also attended the University of Rochester where he received an A.B. in 1919. He received an LL.B. from the Harvard Law School in 1923. A practising attorney, he has been associated with the law firm of Harris, Beach, Keating, Wilcox and Dale of Rochester, New York since 1923. He served in both World Wars, and in 1948, was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. He was elected to Congress in November, 1946, and was reelected in November, 1948, 1950 and 1952. As a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, Representative Keating is now Chairman of Subcommittee to Investigate the Department of Justice. In 1953, Mr. Keating was a member of the United States Congressional delegation to meet with representatives of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the United States delegation to Interparliamentary Union.

FANNIE HURST—Educated at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, Miss Hurst took graduate work at Columbia University, and was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Washington University. She is the author of many novels and short stories, among which are *Any Woman* published in 1950; *Lonely Parade*, *Anitra's Dance*, *Five and Ten*, and *Lummo*. Miss Hurst has also written for motion pictures; her outstanding successes are, *Four Daughters*, *Back Street*, *Imitation of Life*, and *Symphony of Six Million*. Besides her literary career, Miss Hurst has also been active in civic and intellectual fields. She has traveled and lectured extensively. She has been the President of the Author's Guild of America; Chairman on the Committee of Workman's Compensation for Household Employees; and a Member of the New York Mayor's Committee on Unity from 1945 to 1947. Miss Hurst, by Presidential appointment, was a United States delegate to the United Nations World Health Assembly, which met in Geneva in 1952.

Moderator: JAMES F. MURRAY, JR.—New York Attorney; International Counsel and lecturer.

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Should 18-Year-Olds Be Allowed To Vote?

Announcer:

Tonight's Town Meeting is coming to you from the campus of Wagner Lutheran College on Staten Island, New York, high above busy New York harbor.

Wagner College was established in 1883 in Rochester, New York, and moved to its present 72-acre campus in 1918. Here, on Grymes Hill, 400 feet above sea level, the first building was the ancestral home of Sir Edward Cunard, who had selected this site because it overlooked the harbor and the Narrows, through which his ships sailed to all quarters of the globe.

Today, Wagner is a fully accredited liberal arts college offering a wide variety of programs to meet its students' needs. They may secure a two-year associate diploma or a four-year bachelor's degree in any one of twenty fields, including nursing.

Although the students live in a quiet picturesque atmosphere, within an hour they may be in the heart of New York City. Wagner thus offers the advantages of easy access to the cultural offerings of New York as well as the normal college activities of a typical American campus.

And now here to preside over the discussion tonight is our moderator, James F. Murray, Jr.

Moderator Murray:

During the presidential campaign of 1952, both General Eisenhower and Governor Stevenson advocated reducing the voting age below the traditional level of 21 years. The President has since embodied his proposal in a State of the Union message specifically recommending that Congress act to set the voting age at 18.

Since nearly six and one half million young Americans would be affected, the presidential suggestion has excited widespread interest and debate—perhaps more intense among those over 21 than among those who would acquire benefits from the change.

Since the Constitution contains no provisions concerning voting qualifications of American citizens, but leaves it up to the individual states, it would require not only congressional enactment, but also approval of three fourths of the state legislatures for the President's proposal to be ratified as an amendment to the supreme law of the land.

Among the nations of the world, only a handful—Russia, Japan, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Turkey—permit citizens under 21 to vote. The rest, including the vast proportion of the democracies, adhere to the traditional standard. In the United States, Georgia alone has lowered the minimum to 18.

During this session of Congress, the tempo of the controversy has quickened with the opponents of the measure objecting that profound dangers may result from swelling the ranks of the electorate with what they describe as "impressionable minors" who may easily succumb to the lures of demagoguery and emotion, while the advocates of the lower voting age insist that those who are old enough to fight are old enough to vote.

Tonight America's Town Meeting is proud to present two distinguished leaders of American thought to discuss this very vital topic. Our first speaker is Representative Kenneth B. Keating,

Republican from Rochester, New York, and a member of the House Judiciary Committee.

Congressman Keating:

Thank you very much, Mr. Murray.

It seems to me that competency, not arithmetic, should govern the extension of the franchise. An 18-year-old today has wider knowledge of local, national, and world problems and has greater maturity of judgment than his grandfather had at 21. This generalization would apply to nine tenths of our youth. Improved educational facilities and their wider use have been important contributing causes to this result. Anyone who has enjoyed the stimulating experience of appearing before youth groups such as this one here tonight knows that their questions are penetrating and searching to a degree every bit the equal of their elders.

We call upon 18-year-olds to defend their country. An 18-year-old wage-earner has the same tax deductions from his pay envelope to help run the government as does his father. If he transgresses the law, he is held fully accountable. He has all the duties, responsibilities, and obligations that go with citizenship. He should be permitted to have a voice in the selection of those who are to govern and act for him.

Modern science has added many years to the life span. As a result, each year there are more and more voters in the older "age" brackets. In order to even that up, in order to obtain a true cross-section of the thinking of adult Americans, it is desirable to add also to the number of younger voters.

There is no magic in the figure 21. In Roman days, young men

at the age of 18 began their participation in public affairs.

To lower the voting age will encourage young people to take an earlier interest in the important problems facing the world, their nation, their state, and their individual localities. True, they will be harder to regiment. They will do more thinking for themselves. The party machines may have a harder time with them. But when it comes to voting, why isn't that all to the good?

Mr. Murray: Thank you very much, Representative Keating. Now, taking the contrary position, we are very happy and pleased to present America's distinguished author and lecturer, Miss Fannie Hurst. (*Applause*) I was about to add that Miss Hurst, in addition to her very distinguished literary career, was by presidential appointment a delegate for the United States to the United Nations World Health Assembly which met in 1952 in Geneva.

Miss Hurst:

Thank you, Mr. Murray. I'm going to begin with a springboard. If a man is old enough to fight, he is old enough to vote. That is almost a cliché by now, and like a broken record, this phrase spins around a growingly imminent question, "Shall the 18-year-olds be allowed to vote?" Its obvious fallacy, however, is that the man who is old enough to fight at 18 and the man who is old enough to vote at 18 don't rate comparison.

The soldier isn't called upon to think for himself, to any extent. His decisions are handed to him. The voter is required to think for himself, at least theoretically. The dreary fact that millions of them think with their emotions or dance to the be-bop music of the politicians is no reason to add the 18-

year-old girl and boy voter who is not *disqualified* but dangerously apt to be *unqualified*.

Surely you recall how masses of 18-year-old young ladies were appraising the recent and defeated United States presidential candidate from Illinois as "too divine for words," and "simply out of this world." It's not how old is 18, but how wise is 18? Not how smart is 18, but how ready is 18?

Now, about here, someone is more than likely to query, "But what about the arbitrary age of 21? Do those three additional years guarantee the wisdom?" Alas, they do not. That raises another question outside tonight's consideration; mainly, is age, no matter what age, an adequate yardstick by which to measure qualifications for the privilege, I say, privilege, of voting?

But to revert to 18. Now, today's 18-sters appear to be uncontroversially smarter than yesterday's. Exposed to new and remarkable avenues of education, communication, transportation, the products of improved nutrition, health and social progress, today's crop of youth may reasonably be voted a better package than yesterday's. But unless smartness, precocity, and virtuosity flow into the ocean of wisdom, they remain just smartness, precocity, and virtuosity.

Wisdom is not usually or necessarily acquired in the classroom, on the debating team, on the youth radio panel, or even on the battlefield, but in a spaceless area known as time—T-I-M-E. There's already sufficient "green, underdone thinking" inherent in our voting masses without adding to the down-pail. The politicians with axes to grind and who want the 18-year-old vote see in it certain advantages.

Catch them young, while they are more easily impressionable and leaping from crag to crag of this ism and that ism.

Do you remember the political status of your own theories when you were 18? Do you remember their stabilities? Do you know how often they have changed since then into more mature thinking? Bernard Shaw uttered more than a smiting-word-at-any-price when he observed that, "It's a pity that youth should be wasted on the young."

Hazards apparent to the naked eye are imminent in the plan to place in 18-year-old hands, however capable, the solemn heritage of the vote. The closest analogy to this vote is the more-or-less recent woman vote, and should be closely studied. Youth movements come and go, and their contributions, usually pyrotechnical, flare like sky rockets and drop only a shower of fireworks and a stick.

Eighteen years is just not sufficient time to take on the patina of wisdom, but it is plenty of time in which to take on the veneer of cleverness. How old is 18? It is ten years plus eight.

And last, but not least, it is important to note that with all the sound and all the fury, the 18-year-old's voice has scarcely been lifted in behalf of its voting privilege.

Mr. Murray: Thank you very much, Miss Fannie Hurst. Congressman Keating, I noticed that you appeared to be taking exception to some of Miss Hurst's remarks during her statements.

Congressman Keating: That's right. I was very much interested in Miss Hurst's clincher at the end, in which she said to prove that the 18-year-olds were sound, they had not lifted their voice in behalf of the voting privilege. It

seems to me, according to her theories, *that* proves how sound they are—that they are not swayed by emotion, but are reasoning this thing out for themselves. It seems to me that it does violence to the remainder of her argument.

She pointed out that the ability to vote, or true wisdom, is not acquired only in the classroom, or on the battlefield, but in a spaceless area known as time. Now, I would substitute for "time" the word "experience." It seems to me that at the pace at which we are living today, 18-year-olds get more experience than they did a generation or two generations ago. My daughter is 20, and I think that at age 18 she had as much experience with various public affairs. She was better equipped to reach a conclusion as to whom she wanted to have as governor, or at least as well, as I was at 21.

Mr. Murray: Miss Hurst, I notice you have been making notes, too, and would you care to indicate your lack of agreement with Congressman Keating?

Miss Hurst: Yes, I would, because I think we need a great deal of definition here. I don't know what the Congressman means by experience. According to my idea of experience, it is not spectator experience that is going to add to youth the maturity I'm discussing.

The kind of experience to which youth is now exposed is magnificent in contrast to the kind of experience to which we were exposed, but it is not the experience of the arena. It isn't rubbing shoulders with circumstance. It isn't walking down the aisle of defeat. It isn't being able to compare, through personal experience and the kind of patina that comes with years, yesterday with today, and to prophesy and prognosticate to-

day with tomorrow. It's a theoretical experience, Congressman.

Congressman Keating: According to that theory, a person all his life would become better equipped to vote. I don't accept that. I don't think that I am any better able to vote today than I was 20 years ago. I don't accept the fact that people at 80 are better able to cast their vote than people of 40. They *have* had more experience during all that time.

The part of Miss Hurst's thesis with which I took issue was her use of the word time. I don't think that time alone should be the yardstick. I think it has got to be how much a person gleans out of the time he has lived. Many people have had more experience and are better equipped in a five-year period to reach conclusions than other people in 15 years.

I realize that we are here dealing with a subject that is pretty hard to put your finger on, but if we were starting out today, afresh, and didn't have all the tradition about us regarding the age 21, I doubt seriously whether we would pick the age 21 as the one when we were going to place upon a person the responsibility of casting a vote.

Miss Hurst: Congressman, I think you overlook entirely what I predicated some of my remarks on. I said—and I said it was a discussion for another program—I said so far as the age yardstick is concerned, I don't think it is an adequate one at best, whether it is 18, or 30, or 40, for qualification for voting. I think inherent in the problem of voting are more serious considerations, but age is all we have to work with. Therefore, we must think along the line of that particular area of discussion.

Congressman Keating: Well, I

agree, of course, that, first, a certain degree of literacy should be required, and nearly all of our states, as I understand it, do have some literacy requirements for voting now. I feel in that regard, and the figures bear it out, that there are more of the 18 and 19-year-olds still in school today than there were a few years ago. I happen to have the figures. In 1947, 24 per cent of the young people of the ages of 18 and 19 were still in school, whereas today it is 28.8 per cent.

Mr. Murray: May I add on that point, Congressman and Miss Hurst? Do you feel that the 18-year-olds of today are more mature or less mature than the 18-year-olds of decades ago, when the 21-year-old standard was adopted?

Miss Hurst: If I may answer that, I again am taking issue with words. I think he is undoubtedly smarter. Now, maturity. Again, I must go into that area, Congressman, known as time. I don't mean by time a vacuum. I mean a day-by-day climbing of a personality, that growth that goes with the business of living. Whether his experiences are particularly strategic or not is not important. He is living in the world, he is rubbing shoulders with the good and the bad. I therefore think that inevitably today's youth, released into the world earlier, marrying earlier, going to wars, is smarter. He is certainly shoulders, away and beyond, what we were. But that, in my opinion, is not the kind of maturity which gives him wisdom.

Congressman Keating: I agree that he is smarter, and I'm sure we do not differ on that. And I also agree that maturity takes more than that. But I think the obligations that we throw upon our

young people today have also added to their maturity, and I use that word just in the sense which the moderator intended it.

I believe that they are not only smarter but are also maturer, and I think this, that to give them this privilege, to get them thinking at age 18 about these important public questions—thinking more than they do now—will add to the sum total of good citizenship, and it will make them more mature, and it will have that double-edged benefit of granting them the privilege and also increasing their maturity as the years go by.

Miss Hurst: May I ask, Congressman, do you—or perhaps you escaped this phase—do you remember, when you were 18, that you were rather a volatile thinker, that you climbed on to this ism and you climbed on to that ism? Mind you, I wouldn't have it different, for I think it is an inevitable part of youth and this is a dangerous discussion to have in front of the huge audience of youth here. I think the instability and the instability of 18 is part of the growth. But I do not want to inject and project that instability and that uncertainty and that groping for maturity into the laws of my country, as inevitably we do when they help us become law makers.

Congressman Keating: Miss Hurst, with all the sincerity that I'm capable of, I say to you that every day of my life I try to remember not to lose the idealism that I felt when I was 18 years old.

Miss Hurst: Again, I am not speaking of idealism. I'm speaking of instability and unstability that go with aiming for an ideal before you are ready to realize its stature.

Mr. Murray: If I may interrupt for just a moment and perhaps present our *listener* question which is, in a sense, somewhat on the same point. As you may know, each week, Town Meeting presents a handsome 20-volume set of the American People's Encyclopedia to the listener who presents the most provocative question pertinent to the subject under discussion. Tonight's query comes from Miss Lee Alvin of New York City, and her question is, "Can we afford the risk of passing legislative amendments to the Constitution, which may be applicable only to a contemporary generation, premised on the possible fact that war creates an early maturity?" Congressman Keating or Miss Hurst, which of you care to answer that first?

Miss Hurst: Well, I, of course, find it very difficult to accept the premise that this is the outgrowth of war. This has been a very frequently recurring question. It has come up time and time again. I don't think it is premised on war, and therefore I think the question is invalidated by its very nature, if I may say so.

Congressman Keating: Well, I more or less agree with Miss Hurst. I do agree with President Eisenhower that a young man who is called upon to defend his country should have the privilege of voting. I think that is a sound judgment, but it is more in the nature of an emotional argument. I don't consider it the strongest argument for 18-year-olds voting. We hope, and all of us pray, that that situation is temporary.

I don't look upon *this* as a temporary problem. My principal reason for feeling that 18-year-olds should have the vote is because they have all the other obligations of citizenship, and because through

our educational media they have acquired a wisdom and a maturity which they did not have at 18 a generation or two ago. That is the sound basis, and that is something that won't change through the years. It is not a temporary matter.

Mr. Murray: Well, here at Wagner College during the past few weeks, Miss Hurst and Congressman Keating, the students have participated in a campus essay contest. A poll also was taken of 300 students. 148 of them voted in favor of lowering the voting age below 21 and 156 were opposed.

Now, on the stage tonight, are the two students who submitted the winning essays, and I should like to call first upon Miss Joanne Judd, a sophomore at Wagner, majoring in Chemistry. Miss Judd, I believe you have a question for Congressman Keating.

Miss Judd: Congressman Keating do you believe there is any basic desire on the part of young people to have the right to vote? If they don't want this vote, why is the issue being pushed?

Congressman Keating: Yes, Miss Judd, I do. The vote here in Wagner College really rather surprised me. Apparently a small percentage voted against it rather than for it. There is among young people generally, I think, a very widespread desire for the vote. In the House of Representatives, among the pages there, a poll was taken, and they voted three to one in favor of having the right to vote at 18.

However, I do not think the wishes of the 18-year-olds are the sole criterion. When we gave women the right to vote, there were many women in this country who didn't want it.

I think we must look at this

from the point of view of what is best for our country, and I stress, again, the argument that there are more and more older people voting all the time, due to the greater longevity in this country. In order to balance that off, and get a fair cross-section of the thinking of America, it is wise, also, to open it up at the other end.

Miss Hurst: I must say, at this point, Congressman, that if anything convinced me that the 18-year-olds were wise enough to vote, it is their decision, by majority, that they don't want it.

Congressman Keating: Well, that is the argument you made in your presentation that they hadn't lifted their voices. I think that was a little stronger than you intended it, but that they were not asking for it, and therefore that showed their sound judgment and I agree on that.

Mr. Murray: Sharing the contest award with Miss Judd is Richard Prall, a Wagner senior pre-law student. Dick, may we have your question for Miss Fannie Hurst?

Richard Prall: Miss Hurst, is it fair that 18 to 21-year-old individuals assuming adult responsibilities as bread winners, tax payers, and heads of families be deprived of adult responsibilities in government?

Miss Hurst: Well, the major adult responsibility that the 18-year-olds are asked to assume is war, and I have already covered that in my initial statement. Now, the fact that the 18-year-olds are tax payers, in that circumstance, Jackie Coogan, at the age of 7, would have been entitled to vote. So the automatic participation of a wage salary earner I don't think again analogous.

Certainly, Jackie Coogan in

drawing a fabulous salary was enjoying the rights of any American citizen without any major effort on his part other than the average American citizen. So I think the analogy is rather a feeble one, if you don't mind my saying so.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Prall, were you satisfied with that answer?

Mr. Prall: I would just like to say that statistics show that the aggregate of married people, tax payers, and breadwinners is over 10 million, and that is between the age group of 18 and 19-year-old individuals. That doesn't include 20-year-olds. So that 10 million people, it seems to me, seems to be at least one sixth of the labor force, and I think since they are between the ages of 18 and 19-years of age, that they should have an adult voice in government.

Miss Hurst: I think you are over-looking there a rather important fact, if I may say so. Our government exerts a very special paternalism toward the G.I. who has married at that age, and who has the responsibility of family. I think that special dispensation is a compensation act which just about balances it, and I think if a young family man gets help from our government, whether it is farm help or whether it is building-a-home help, he should feel that he is getting dispensation and compensation as an adult, without participating in making our laws before, I think, he is quite ready for it.

Congressman Keating: Well, I might point out, as Mr. Prall said, we're not talking in that question only of the G.I.'s. There are millions of young wage earners of 18, 19 and 20, who are paying taxes, they are subject to the same deductions from their pay envelope, they are paying taxes the same as their

elders, yet they have no voice in the election of those men who are to levy taxes upon them. It's taxation without representation.

Mr. Murray: Well, that has a familiar ring, Congressman Keating. I just wonder, by way of tying together these two questions, how you both feel with respect to the query, as to whether or not the qualifications that fit young men for military service necessarily make them mature enough to exercise the voting privilege?

Congressman Keating: No, I don't say that necessarily. I disagree with Miss Hurst in her statement that a soldier is not called upon to think for himself, his decisions are handed to him. I have had a little experience in that field as an officer, and I know the fighting qualities of our young men and the very fact that they could think for themselves is one of the reasons that has made them the greatest fighting force in the world. (*Applause*)

Miss Hurst: I'm speaking, Congressman, of strategic decisions. I'm not speaking of the reflexes, and the gallantry, and the bravery of our boys on the field. I take that for granted. That just isn't controversial.

I'm talking about the economical and social aspects of his life. He goes into a regimented way of life, and the decisions we are discussing here tonight are in that area. Certainly no one could even question the quality of our men on the field.

Congressman Keating: Oh, no, and I know Miss Hurst didn't mean to question them, and I hope that nothing I said would carry that implication. What I meant to say, however, was that our young men are unique, more than any other soldiers in the world, in being able to follow out a command; yet, when an emergency struck them, to be able to know what they should do.

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QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Questioner: Miss Hurst, Do you therefore believe that the youth of America should keep out of politics?

Miss Hurst: By no means. You can't go through our universities and see the amount of time and attention that is devoted to political economy and feel for a moment that it is anything but extremely valuable. I say certainly *not* keep out of the arena of thinking in terms of politics. I'm talking about plunging into the participation of the vote before you are ready to go actively into politics.

Questioner: To Congressman

Keating. If a person under 21 cannot be held to a contract, why should they be given the right to vote?

Congressman Keating: Well, I don't think that necessarily those two things go together. There are many states where they are held liable to a contract. I think you are correct. You are from New York State, as I am, and in New York State, the age is 21 when the person has contractual responsibility. In many states of the country, it is a younger age than that. I don't think the two, however, go hand in hand. I personally wouldn't

object to contractual responsibility at 18, but I don't think there is any connection between the two.

Miss Hurst: I think you say in your statement, Congressman, that 18-year-old youth is dealt with in criminal law on an adult basis. I think if we looked into it we would find that there is a very special dispensation and discrimination in favor of handling the 18-year-olds in a special department of consideration in our country. I think it is one of its glories that this is true. It is one of its written and unwritten laws in various states.

Questioner: My question is to Miss Hurst. Do you not feel that an 18-year-old college sophomore is more familiar with national problems and therefore more qualified to make decisions on them than a 40-year-old who never got past the eighth grade?

Miss Hurst: I think he is probably as qualified from an academic standpoint, yes. And that again leads us right deeply into the fallacies of our qualifications for voting. The forty-year-old who never got past the eighth grade is not, in my opinion, a qualified voter. That again remains that unexplored area of our discussion today.

Congressman Keating: I'd have to take issue with Miss Hurst on the forty-year-old who never got past the eighth grade not being qualified. Now we have gone to opposite sides. I'm arguing her case and she is arguing mine. It seems to me that that gets back to her definition of wisdom. It isn't only book learning. I wouldn't want to be considered to be advocating that alone.

I think experience and all of the things that enter into life bear on

the subject of ability and qualifications of voting.

Mr. Murray: Let me have a question from a young lady this time.

Questioner: My question is directed to Congressman Keating. Is there any evidence as to how the servicemen feel about the problem other than 18-year-old servicemen?

Congressman Keating: No, there isn't. I'd like to tell you a personal experience I had when I was serving overseas during the last war, in which a serviceman sold me on his ability to vote—a 19-year-old—but I don't want to take the time for that, and as far as I know, there have been no polls on that subject. Perhaps Miss Hurst knows of something.

Miss Hurst: No, I just wanted to ask the Congressman if he didn't think that was rather an eloquent statement slanted toward our discussion tonight. Is it possible that there has been no composite statements from these men regarding what is a rather important issue?

Congressman Keating: I don't know of any. After all, solicitous as we very probably are, about the servicemen, they do not represent but a relatively small percentage of the total number involved. My guess is very strongly that you would find the servicemen would vote two or three to one in favor of having the privilege to vote when they are called upon to fight. But I can't say that categorically.

Questioner: This question is addressed to Miss Hurst. Where the suffrage has been extended in Georgia to 18-year-olds, have they used their voting power?

Miss Hurst: I'm going to pass that on to the Congressman, who

I'm sure is better qualified to discuss that.

Congressman Keating: I believe in all honesty and fairness, and I appreciate Miss Hurst's unselfishness in that regard—I think they have used the right to vote just in about the same percentage that their elders have. I was told that the first time, when they first qualify, the percentage voting is somewhat larger than normal, but then it settles down and there is about the same percentage that vote other times.

Mr. Murray: Thank you, Congressman, for pinch-hitting on that reply. Our next question, please.

Questioner: My question is addressed to Miss Hurst. Do you think by allowing 18-year-olds to vote, juvenile delinquency can be eliminated through greater interest in the welfare of the country?

Miss Hurst: I must say in all fairness and looking at it from both sides, I certainly think it could do no harm. It's hypothetical what amount of good it could do. But let's assume, just for the reason of being sanguine, that it might help a bit. I'm jumping over to the Congressman's side on that one.

Mr. Murray: My question is directed to Congressman Keating. Does the ability to fight a war have any relation to maturity of mind? After all, I feel a child is capable of fighting.

Congressman Keating: I have explained that I don't think that is the strongest argument in favor of giving the 18-year-olds the right to vote. I think when they say that an 18-year-old who fights for his country should have the right to vote, then the people who make that argument—and I make it too—base it upon the fact that they have assumed the obligation of defending

you and me and defending our homes and our country, and therefore they should have the privilege of electing the men that are going to tell them to go out and defend us.

Questioner: Representative Keating, do you believe the 18-year-olds will follow in their parents' footsteps and that their vote will be a repetition of the family vote?

Mr. Murray: There's a good practical question for you, Congressman.

Congressman Keating: That is a very good question. I know that in many areas where the pattern of voting is either Republican or Democrat and pretty well settled, the political leaders there are lukewarm toward the idea of 18-year-olds and 19-year-olds voting. Why? Because they are afraid that they will reason things out for themselves and cannot be regimented as well as their elders.

Now, that is something that I'm not afraid of, and I think it is good politics for the future, and it is good politics not to be afraid of that argument.

Questioner: Congressman Keating, you are willing to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 because of your stated reasons. By that same logic, would you be willing to reduce the age qualification for United States Representatives from 25 to, say, 21?

Congressman Keating: I have never given any thought to that, but I'm not at all sure I'd be opposed to it. I would look to the voters to elect a person properly qualified to represent them. I would think normally it would be someone 25 years old or more, but I'm not scared by that argument.

Mr. Murray: On that note, may I thank you, Congressman Keating,

and Miss Fannie Hurst for your most interesting discussions.

Our thanks this evening to our hosts for this Town Meeting on Staten Island. Dr. David Delo, President of Wagner College, and

his associates, A. J. Krahmer, Mr. Robert Owens, Jr., Frank Mulvihill, President, and Art O. Hedquist, Executive Secretary of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce.

FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Background Questions

1. In his State of the Union message, President Eisenhower asked Congress to put through a resolution to amend the Constitution and give the vote to all those 18 years and over. Was this a good or bad recommendation?
2. Has agitation for lowering the voting age been going on for many years? Or, has advocacy of this move become stronger since military demands required an 18-year-old draft?
 - a. If strong agitation for such a move preceded the 18-year-old draft, what basic reasons were given in its support?
 - b. If not, is the often-heard argument that "if they're old enough to fight, they're old enough to vote" a valid one?
 - c. Can lowering the voting age be considered as an emergency measure of part of a wartime policy? Or, must it be viewed as a matter of permanent policy in our political life?
 - d. If military service is the paramount reason for giving the vote to 18-year-olds, should boys and girls of that age who are not in service be granted suffrage?
3. What was the reasoning behind the institution of the 18-year-old draft?
 - a. Was it because of a manpower shortage? Or, are 18-year-olds at the height of physical strength?
 - b. Are they, as many argued then, more easily disciplined, more malleable, more used to group action than older men?
 - c. Are they, as others claimed, less bowed down with mature responsibilities of family and business?
4. Are the qualifications that fit young men for military service necessarily those that make for mature exercise of voting privileges?
5. Are today's 18-year-olds more or less mature than those of a few decades ago?
 - a. Have they demonstrated emotional stability and intellectual awareness?
 - b. Has their environment become more or less protective? Do they stay in school longer? Are they supported longer?
 - c. Have the adult problems confronting them become infinitely more complex? Or, are they relatively the same?
 - d. What experiences in coping with problems and assuming responsibilities has the average 18-year-old had?

- e. What experience with personal freedom and independent judgment has the average 18-year-old had?
6. Which of the aforementioned characteristics is most important in a new voter?
7. What is the relationship between the obligations imposed by a society and the rights and privileges it grants?
 - a. What rights and privileges has the American 18-year-old? How do these compare with rights and privileges of the youth of other nations?
 - b. What obligations does American youth have to their society? Are these obligations greater or lesser than those imposed upon youth of other nations?
 - c. Do the obligations of 18-year-olds in this country outweigh their rights and privileges? Or, vice versa?
8. Has American youth been assuming more rights and obligations in recent years?
9. Are not all Americans affected by government policy from the day of birth on and before? If this is so, then should the fact that one is affected by government policy be an argument for suffrage?
10. Do our laws and courts take special cognizance of the youth offenders under 21? If so, is this special care based on an assumption of relative immaturity?
11. Have there been any studies made of the 18-year-olds as a group?
12. At what point in his experience is the average 18-year-old?

has he just graduated high school? is he living at home with parents?

has he already started working? is he married?

has he gone to college? is he going into the army?
13. What does the experience of the State of Georgia, the only state which has given the 18-year-old the vote, indicate as to the advisability of extending this practice?
 - a. Former Gov. Ellis Arnall, who sponsored the 18-year-old vote, said that it had "added a tremendous group of voters" and had had an important effect on state elections because young people take a more active interest in politics. Do you agree?
 - b. Gov. Herman Talmadge, who also approves of the lower voting age, said that youth reaching 18 register and cast a "novelty" vote and then tend to lose interest until they are 25. Do you agree?
14. Since there is nothing in the Constitution which sets a voting age, does a change in the voting age require a Constitutional amendment?
 - a. What will be the effect of a Congressional resolution such as was suggested by the President?
 - b. Is this a matter that should be left to the states to decide?
15. How would enfranchising the 18-year-old affect the U. S.?
 - a. Evaluate the contention that youth would bring more idealism to American political life.
 - b. Evaluate the contention that a youthful vote will tend to strengthen visionary, impractical or "crackpot" schemes.

“MEXICO

A Portrait of Progress”

A six-week series of informational and cultural programs on the theme “Mexico—A Portrait of Progress” will take place in New York City from March 16th through April 20th, under the direction of The Town Hall. Plans have been in progress over the past few months, both in Mexico and the United States, to bring a group of Mexican leaders representing the fields of government, business, education, labor-management relations, and the arts, for six weekly discussion programs in the Town Hall auditorium. The meetings have been scheduled for six successive Tuesdays at 4 p.m., starting March 16th. Each discussion period will be followed by motion pictures illustrating some phase of Mexican life. Afterward, an informal reception will be held in the Town Hall auditorium lounge at which members of the audience will have an opportunity to meet the speakers.

Admission to the six meetings is by invitation. Business executives concerned with Mexico or international trade in general, educators, mature students from institutions within the metropolitan area, and a selected group of individuals interested in the project are now being invited. Requests for tickets from the public generally will be honored as space permits. The project is being financed by gifts from Mexican and United States corporations and individuals as a public service.

In addition to the six Town Hall programs, a number of collateral events are being arranged as part of this unique international project. Window displays and special exhibitions of Mexican painting, crafts, textiles, coins, architecture, etc., are being planned in co-operation with libraries, banks, stores, the Town Hall Club, and elsewhere in New York City.

To emphasize the importance of the project, “America’s Town Meeting of the Air,” produced by Town Hall for ABC radio network, will originate from Mexico City on March 16th, 9:00-9:45 p.m., E. S. T. “How Can We Strengthen Mexican-U.S. Friendship?” will be discussed on the broadcast by William B. Richardson, Vice President of National City Bank of New York; Adolfo I. Riveroll, President of the Life Insurance Company, La Nacional; Rodrigo de Llano, Director General of *Excelsior*; and John Wilhelm of *Business Week*. Other special radio and television programs are being arranged locally, including a 13-week series on Mexico to be broadcast over station WNYC.

To encourage student attendance at the Town Hall discussion programs, an essay competition open to high school seniors and college undergraduates, as well as to high school teachers, has been arranged. Winners of the two winning essays will be flown to Mexico City by American Airlines, where the Mexican government will provide living expenses and a summer scholarship at the University of Mexico.



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